

THE OUTER CIRCLE

The Action of Attraction **What Tradition Eleven really tells us about attraction** **versus promotion**

PLUS

The Sad Truth

Humility and Step Seven

Are Men-Only Meetings Needed?





International Service Organization of SAA, Inc.

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The Outer Circle Mission

The mission of *The Outer Circle* is to provide information from the ISO and to share the experience, strength, and hope members have obtained from working the SAA program of recovery. As the first iteration put it in 1998, *The Outer Circle* newsletter “carries the message of hope to the sex addict who still suffers” — especially prisoners and others who don’t have the Internet.

Through *TOC*, SAA members contribute articles and poems that focus on working the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. It also communicates ISO news, regional activities, and other items of interest.

SAA meetings are encouraged to reproduce *TOC* at no charge and display it alongside other SAA literature. To keep costs down, please print out the online version.

If you have comments or suggestions, please see contact information on p. 28. To have an article considered for publication, see our Submission Guidelines on page 30.

To ensure that future issues can be offered without cost, please consider making a tax-deductible donation now to support publication of the newsletter.

November - December 2015

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FROM THE EDITOR

Rethinking Tradition Eleven

BY GARY T.

**It seems the
simple direction
of Tradition Eleven
is creating much
confusion — and
getting in the
way of reaching
still suffering sex
addicts.**

One of my favorite recovery maxims is, “You can only keep what you give away.” But what is the proper way to give away the message of recovery to the still suffering sex addict? Tradition Eleven tell us that we are to “attract rather than promote.”

It seems that simple direction is creating much confusion — and getting in the way of reaching still suffering sex addicts. That’s why I hope everyone reads the Tradition Eleven article in this issue.

It wasn’t long ago I suffered the same confusion about Tradition Eleven. I remember a discussion arose in our intergroup meeting about placing an advertisement in our weekly newspaper for Sex Addicts Anonymous. “Surely,” I thought, “this is promotion, not attraction.”

Thankfully, God gave me enough grace that day to humbly listen to others, unlike in the past when my self-centered arrogance prevented it. Turns out, I was doing exactly what the author of the article warned against: confusing the medium with the message.

The real question wasn’t where is this message being placed, but rather, what is this message saying. Ours was simply asking a question. “Are you addicted to sex? SAA can help.” It then gave a phone number to our hotline to call for more information.

It’s hard to know who that message reached, but that’s not our concern. We took the action and then we let go of the outcome. God does the rest.

Taking the action is what Tradition Eleven — and our spiritual program — asks of us.

In this season of thanksgiving and giving, I hope we will all show our gratitude to recovery by taking actions to attract others to our program — and share the profound message of recovery from sexual addiction.

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Major Campaigns are Game Changer for SAA Outreach

BY JOE H.

The large scale, multi-media outreach campaigns have the potential to reach five to ten million people.

As you read this message, the insidious disease of sex addiction is destroying people's lives. Recently in the space of one hour, three people called: a university student and two married men. The student had been kicked out of school for his acting out. One of the married men was arrested at his home in front of his family.

While difficult emotionally, moments like these are gifts that provide clarity and a laser-like focus. The "suffering addict" stops being an abstraction, and our "one primary purpose," carrying the message, burns so brightly that it relativizes other concerns into their subordinate place. The only humane response is to do something to help. Action!

The Houston, Phoenix Metro, and New York City intergroups are or will soon be implementing large scale, multi-media outreach campaigns that have the potential to reach five to ten million people. All three campaigns use print, digital, and e-mail ads in an effort to follow the spirit of Tradition Eleven.

Houston's campaign started on September 10, 2015 and the results so far are very good. More than 500 people have clicked on digital ads and viewed the Houston Intergroup website, while 136 newcomers have phoned or texted in response to the print ad.

Most importantly, SAA members Twelve-Stepped 71 newcomers. Of those, eight confirmed newcomers have attended their first meeting. Since Houston has sixty geographically dispersed meetings a week, it is likely that other newcomers have shown up, although this is not confirmed.

The pilots will be evaluated, and the lessons learned will be applied in additional outreach pilots in 2016.

LETTERS

Blue vs. Green: The Battle of the Recovery Books

The battle of the books – the SAA Green Book vs. The AA Big Book – is as foolish as most wars. And you may wonder why it has for so long been waged.

The books differ nicely in their content and intent.

The AA Big Book starts up with a doctor's formulation of the addict's situation, the founder's story, and discussions of alcoholics and alcoholism. It presents an overview of the Steps and then includes chapters on service, wives, employers, and family.

The SAA Green Book, on the other hand, begins with chapters on the fellowship, its purpose, and how to define sex addiction. It then goes on in separate chapters with detailed examinations of the Steps and the Traditions.

They are also similar in two ways — both of which may give rise to the competition for “the best!”

The first similarity they have is their main division into two parts – the second part of each consisting of stories of recovery. Their similar division here might suggest they are rivals, such as opposing football teams which both wear the same gear.

The second similarity is that they have each helped save the lives of countless sex addicts. Some sex addicts proclaim their favorite book as the “one true way.” Their thumping is loud and almost deafens to the wisdom history has taught us of the danger of sanctifying a book.

Rather than preaching for the dominance of one book over the other, what I tend to do is accept the praises of the volume that is not my favorite but which has done its work so well for so many of our fellow addicts who are grateful for it. And, as I seem to find when I dip into that non-favorite one, I more and more come upon things to admire and use in it.

The books are tools – both different and similar – but they both serve the same fine purpose in our lives: the recovery of our friends in SAA. What a blessing they both are!

Robert B.

Men-Only Meetings are Crucial to Recovery for Some

Joe H.'s column in the September/October newsletter stimulated fears I have that finding a safe haven for my recovery will become more difficult.

I am unable to attend SAA meetings that allow women. In many cases, I am triggered by their presence, as I know many male sex addicts are. This is simply the nature of the disease in some cases and should not carry blame or judgment.

In addition, I have a therapist-approved boundary with my wife that I not attend any mixed meetings, at least for the time being. My recovery is going well and I am very grateful for the program.

If I lived in a world without men-only meetings, I would be hard pressed to pursue my recovery, and not only I, but my wife would suffer. The last time one of my men-only meetings brought up the issue of allowing women, I prayed that the measure would go down. (It did.)

In an ideal world, all meetings would be mixed gender. We would be free enough of our disease and committed enough to our collective recovery to see only addicts in the room, addicts who need help.

But in the real world, I know that a disease based around sexuality is going to provide complicated issues around mixed-gender meetings.

Please recognize these complications, offer a continuing voice to those who suffer from them, and do not make it politically incorrect to hold the view that men-only meetings have a vital place in the program — as do women-only meetings!

Let's work to make the program available to everyone who needs it, without denying it to anyone else in the process.

Anonymous

Letters to the editor are welcome. Please send your feedback to toc@saa-recovery.org. Letters may be edited for space and content.

LETTERS

Quick Take: Pearls of Wisdom Heard Lately, Part 2

Editor's note: Quick Take invites short responses of around 100 words on an issue or topic of recovery. Next issue's quick take: What do you resolve to do to strengthen your recovery in the New Year? If you have ideas for Quick Takes, please send them to toc@saa-recovery.org.

Tools and Techniques are Part of the Steps

What I heard was, the Steps are not enough for some people. This was disconcerting at first, since I had worked through the Steps but fell back into habitual relapse. I then realized I must also use formal tools as part of my program, such as internet blockers, etc., along with the normal tools of going to meetings, getting a sponsor, (re-)working the Steps. I realized the tools and techniques are part of the Steps, and that it's OK to need them now and in the future.

Raymond W.

Phrases Help Keep Him in the Solution

Here are some phrases my sponsor uses to help keep me in the solution instead of the problem.

“I'm not on a reconnaissance mission, looking for potential sex partners.”

“Turn it over to the Big Guy!”

“Make a decision and feel good about it.”

“If I feel good about myself and talk about what's going on, I won't want to harm anyone.”

“She is a human being, not a sex object!”

Kevin C.M.

ISO NEWS

ISO Announces the \$30,000 Matching Gift Challenge

Please Help SAA Meet the Challenge!

If you have ever considered enrolling as a LifeLine Partner, now would be the time! Why? An anonymous member of SAA has pledged to match donations to the ISO up to \$30,000.

Our donor wants:

- » To use his gift to encourage new, additional contributions.
- » To avoid detracting from current contributions and fundraisers.
- » The matching gift to go into the ISO general fund.

Details about the match:

- » Starts September 1, 2015; ends December 25, 2016.
- » Only new or increased Monthly LifeLine Partner enrollments will qualify for the match.
- » New LifeLines: the first monthly contribution will qualify for a match equal to the amount of the first year's total donation; 12 monthly contributions.
- » *Example: A new LifeLine of \$20 per month. The first donation of \$20 will immediately qualify for a match of \$240. $\$20 \times 12 (1yr) = \240*
- » Increased LifeLines: will be matched in the same manner as new LLs, except only the increased amount will be matched.
- » *Example: A \$20 LifeLine is increased to \$30 per month. The increased amount of \$10 will immediately qualify for a match of \$120. $\$10 \times 12 (1yr) = \120*
- » Donations will be used to support outreach and all of the activities and services provided by the ISO.

How to Participate:

Enroll as a new LifeLine Partner or increase your current LifeLine. You can enroll or increase online or by telephone. Online at: saa-recovery.org/Life-LinePartner/. Telephone: 800-477-8191.

Board Approves CSA Name Change, LitCom Mid-Year Face-to-Face

In the months of August through September, the ISO Board of Trustees approved changing the name of the Compulsive Sexual Avoidance Outreach Committee and funding for up to twelve Literature Committee representatives for a January mid-year face-to-face meeting in Houston, TX.

Here's a closer look at all the Board's actions:

August

- » Approved motion to change the name of the Compulsive Sexual Avoidance Outreach Committee (CSA) to the Intimacy and Sexual Avoidance Outreach Committee.

September

- » Approved motion for funding for up to twelve Literature Committee representatives (which includes the editor of TOC) for two and a half days of mid-year face-to-face meetings to be held in Houston, TX in January, 2016. Dates are to be determined; however members would arrive on a Thursday evening and depart on a Sunday afternoon. It is also requested that alternates be reimbursed up to a maximum of \$500 per person. There are currently six alternates. Alternates who take the place of a voting member would receive full funding if the voting member were not able to attend.
- » Approved motion to sunset the International Development Committee due to lack of activity over the last few years.

Financial Report: Funds Go For Multimedia Outreach Initiatives

In the month of September we had a budget deficit of \$15,512.03. We had budgeted for a deficit of \$421.60. The increase in the budget deficit was due to paying for three pilot multimedia outreach initiatives at cost of \$15,315.68.

Our gross sales revenue for the SAA Green Book exceeded our estimate by \$871.18 in September and has exceeded our estimate by \$7,756.12 for the year. Our pamphlet and booklet sales were below our estimate by \$273.00 for September and are below our estimate by \$2,295.82 for the year.

Our bronze medallion exceeded our sales by \$352.47 in September and has

ISO NEWS

exceeded our estimate by \$3,089.41 for the year.

Our total sales for September exceeded our estimate by \$742.39.

Individual donations exceeded our estimate by \$4,895.00 for September and has exceeded our estimate by \$27,860.65 for the year.

Group donations were below our estimate by \$2,616.72 in September but have exceeded our estimate by \$18,714.28 for the year.

Our product inventory is valued at \$54,839.73.

Our expenses exceeded our estimate by \$17,827.94 in September. The increase in expenses was due in part to the approval and payment to fund three pilot multimedia outreach initiatives in cooperation with the Houston, Phoenix, and New York City intergroups.

Summary of the annual budget (January 1, 2015 to September 30, 2015):

- » Gross sales have exceeded our estimate by \$9,893.11.
- » Donations have exceeded our estimate by \$46,574.93.
- » Expenses are over our estimate by \$26,848.68.

Our operational reserve is fully funded.

If you have any questions, please let me know.

In Your Service,

Joe H.

Executive Director

Be of Service to the 2016 International Convention of SAA

You can help the 2016 SAA convention by serving on the program committee. We will be taking applications for speakers and workshop presenters and talking to them one on one to help determine where to place them in the program schedule. It's a great opportunity to get to know recovering sex addicts from all over the country and even the world. If you are interested, please drop a note to info@saa-recovery.org.

DEAR GRACE

How to Make Women Feel More Welcome

BY WOMEN'S
OUTREACH
SUBCOMMITTEE

**Above all, stay
sober, work the
steps and keep
the sharing
solutions focused
both in meetings
and in the
fellowship.**

Dear Grace,

I am a guy who has witnessed many women come to our meetings over the years and not come back. Is it something we are doing? Or something we should be doing? I feel we all try to make them welcome and want them to stay, but they don't.

—A guy who wants to see change

Dear Guy Who Wants to See Change:

Ultimately, the choice to stay in recovery is up to each individual. We can't compel anyone to come back to our meeting. However, here are some ideas which have helped women feel more welcome: offer handshakes rather than hugs, be friendly but not nosy, and look the woman in the eyes when speaking to her. Above all, stay sober, work the steps, and keep the sharing solutions focused both in meetings and in fellowship.

These things make a meeting more attractive to all newcomers. See the *Safe and Sexually Sober Meetings* pamphlet for more suggestions. Something you can do as a man that will help the meeting and everyone in it is to encourage others in your meeting to read this pamphlet. Through the group conscience, your meeting could incorporate the suggestions into your readings and procedures.

That pamphlet and two others have been packaged into a women's welcome packet of literature now offered on the SAA website. It also includes a welcome letter from the WOSC. These items may reassure a woman newcomer that there is a place in SAA for women, even if she doesn't see another woman in your meeting room that first day. If possible, augment it with some local information,

such as phone numbers of local women willing to receive calls. Be careful not to push that on her; remember, she chose to come to your mixed meeting.

Above all, remember that we are all suffering from the same disease with the same solution.

Blessings,

Grace

*Statement of Purpose for Dear Grace: To reach out to all women with a desire to stop addictive sexual behavior through this printed medium and share with the fellowship the types of questions the Grace e-mail (grace@saa-women.org) receives. *Names have been changed to protect anonymity.**

Voices of Recovery

“Effective amends are as selfless and sincere as we can make them, with no hidden agendas.” —Sex Addicts Anonymous, page 49

Service work and acts of love are living amends that are also incredible validations to my spirit. I can bring joy and love into the lives of others as an amends to my past, where my fear-filled actions brought suffering and pain.

When I have done a thorough housecleaning and know in my heart that my actions are grounded in love, I can freely give my time as a means of assisting someone along the path of their life journey. The added benefit for me is a boost in my spirit, an increased degree of self-esteem, a stronger connection to my fellow human beings, and, ultimately, a stronger connection to my God.

Today, I will commit to at least one anonymous act of kindness for the sake of love.

Excerpted from the booklet, *Voices of Recovery: Meditations on the Steps and Traditions*. Submissions are needed to help create a daily meditation book. For more information including how to submit a meditation, see page 26.

DEAR WILL

A Spiritual Way to Deal with Objectification

BY WILL

One of the
quickest ways
to move beyond
regarding another
person as a sexual
object is to get to
know that person.

Dear Will:

I have been attending SAA meetings for about six months. I am gay and attend some men's-only meetings in my area. Some of the men wear very revealing clothing to the meetings, and I struggle with staying present for the meeting in the presence of these men. On the one hand, I don't want to make an issue of this matter since I don't see any of the other men having difficulties with it. On the other hand, I want the meeting to be safe for me. What should I do?

—New and Still Struggling

Dear NASS:

I think it is safe to assume that the men at your meeting are not aware that they are dressing in a way that is causing you difficulties. There are at least a couple of different things you can do.

First of all, you could handle it at the group level. This could mean asking for a group conscience to add some language to the meeting format about such awareness, or asking the group leader to make an announcement during the meeting along the lines of "please be aware that the way you dress may be causing difficulties for others." This method has the advantage of not putting other men on the spot.

Or you could handle it on a more personal level. Will has found over the years that one of the quickest ways to move beyond regarding another person as a sexual object is to get to know that person.

This could simply mean talking to him after a meeting about some matter of interest to the

both of you while you defer discussion about his mode of dress until later.

It may help you in this regard to remember the words of the St. Francis Prayer: “Lord, grant that I may seek rather . . . to understand than to be understood”

If you choose to go this route, have your sponsor or a program buddy with you during these chats if you have any concern that it might not be a safe situation for you.

Over time, you may very well find that the aspects of this man that are allowing him to rent space in your head will melt away. If not, then you always have the option to bring up the topic with him at an opportune time.

Will suggests considering this situation prayerfully and talking to your sponsor before taking any actions. The right answer may come to you during your prayers or your talk with your sponsor, or both.

-Will

*If you have a question for Will,
please send an email to [men4saa@
saa-recovery.org](mailto:men4saa@saa-recovery.org).*

The River of God's Will

By Paul P.

*Floating down the river
Turbulence all about
Unknown direction
A Self will imposed drought*

*Steering for some
Sanity Navigating on my own
Reacting to life's problems
Addictive promises overblown.*

*Steering at the helm,
Unwilling to abandon this tight grip,
Considering letting go
may turn around this rocky ship.*

*What if I threw my troubles inside
This River known as God's will?
With heartfelt abandon,
A God size hole to fill.*

*Unknown destiny,
Surrendering to a greater force,
The River of God's will
Is not the answer just the source.*

*Facing up to my difficulty
Allowing someone else to drive
Standing out of the way
3rd Step wisdom I abide*

*The River of God's will
Delivering me on the brink
I must allow this power in
So this ship Called recovery won't sink.*

LIVING IN SOBRIETY

What Longterm Sobriety Really Looks Like

BY MARY JOY S.

**Nearly 18 years
of sobriety
have reduced
denial, restored
relationships,
and renewed
spirituality.
But it's still
contingent on a
daily reprieve.**

When I was newly sober, my illusions of what seventeen years of sobriety would look like are very different than what is real for me today.

I was desperate when I got to this program. My life was the culmination of “self will run riot” and it was filled with pain. That pain and desperation made me willing to get a sponsor and listen to the suggestions that were given to me. Those suggestions were:

- 1) Go to a lot of meetings.
- 2) Work through the Twelve Steps of SAA.
- 3) Call my sponsor and meet with him on a regular basis.
- 4) Tell the truth since I cannot save my face and my behind at the same time.
- 5) Be willing to work with others and look for ways to be of service.

The romantic notions I held about what long-term sobriety would look like were that I would be more saint like; be triggered infrequently; and be happy, joyous, and free most of the time. On April 1, 2016, with the grace of my Higher Power, I will celebrate eighteen years of sobriety from my inner circle behaviors.

But my character defects are still alive and well, and I am reminded on a regular basis that I am still a sex addict. So what is different today than seventeen plus years ago and why is it worth it to stick around and do the work of recovery? Let me list the whys.

- 1) “The truth shall set you free.” Having gone through rounds of working the Twelve Steps including Fourth Steps and ongoing Tenth Steps, my character defects are no longer a surprise to me.

I know when I am being self-centered, mean, dishonest, insecure, fearful, controlling, manipulative, perfectionistic, and hurtful. There is no longer denial about these traits in my personality. When they show up (and they do on a regular basis), I have a well-used blue print on what to do. I make amends and correct my behavior. I share it with one or more of my recovery support people, I release it to my Higher Power through prayer and meditation and then I let it go. Today, my spiritual muscles around this process are well honed and the process works.

2) My relationships are restored. I hold myself accountable for my thoughts, feelings, behaviors, and actions. This frees me from such default traits, such as victim thinking. How liberating to know that being willing to see and experience the truth about myself can cause such a shift and a surrender that allows my Higher Power to create miracles for me with all the people I love and value so much. It's ironic that it's not perfection that people want from me but vulnerability and the humility to ask for forgiveness when I mess up.

3) The miracle of moving from shame to Grace continues to be my experience. Much of my teen and adult life was spent in secrecy and shame, hidden away from the sunlight of the Spirit. Today, there are absolutely no secrets. I have people I love and trust to share

everything with. This makes it very hard to isolate since so many supportive connections have been made. When I want to isolate (and I still do), by reaching out instead to one of my recovery buddies I am reminded that no matter what I have thought, said, or done, I am still a precious person worthy of healing, love, and good experiences.

4) The experience of surrender is now a strong spiritual muscle for me. It gets stronger with every Third and Seventh Step I complete. This is a frequent part of my recovery. When I am in self-will, manipulation, and control (which I still am on a frequent basis), I get the opportunity to once again surrender it to my Higher Power. I try to start every day on my knees as a physical practice of letting go and letting God. It is not a religious practice and it is not done for that purpose. It is an exercise that reminds me how powerful and destructive my addict is and how desperately important it is for me to continue to give it up to my Higher Power. In surrender, I am safe. In surrender, I let my Higher Power do for me what I am absolutely incapable of doing for myself. That is what I am reminded of when I get on my knees each morning.

If you have ten or more years of sobriety and would like to celebrate by writing a Living in Sobriety column, please contact toc@saa-recovery.org.



The Sad Truth

Working the steps is a path to accepting sadness — and embracing happiness

BY TONY M.

Until I got into recovery, I had spent every day of my life striving to put on a happy face. I kept my sadness at bay with pure determination and willpower. I thought, “If I’m just tough enough not to feel it, everything will be okay. If I can just pretend that things are great long enough, then maybe they will be.”

Fighting true sadness, however, is exhausting! Instead, what I’ve learned to do in recovery and through working the steps is to accept my powerlessness — and my sadness. When I finally started doing that, I realized there are a few real things for me to be sad about:

- » Both my siblings have chosen not to communicate or have a relationship with me.
- » I am a childhood victim of random egregious violence and emotional incest.
- » I have been single for the last four years.

While these are legitimate things to be sad about, I’ve often made the sadness worse

through my addictive thinking. I know when the time comes, I must make Ninth Step amends on my end. But upon diligent reflection (working Step Eleven), I came to see that most of the reasons they are mad has nothing to do with me.

Another part of my addictive thinking that causes me sadness is my deep belief that I need to be a hero in order to be loved. But while I was acting invincible, my acting out and self-destructive behavior were destroying me. I was terrified of asking for help or being rigorously honest. After all, heroes don't ask for help, and they certainly don't admit their weaknesses, so I thought.

This hero-thinking also made me completely reject the ways I have been victimized. It made me take on full responsibility for my victimization and believe I must have deserved it. I also believed I deserve to be treated poorly, and if no one else was doing it, I did things to hurt myself. That's truly sad.

I have been a real victim many times in my life. But because I couldn't accept I was being victimized, I told myself I was completely responsible for things that happened to me. I'm a strong believer in personal responsibility, but in cases of childhood trauma, that's like telling someone whose home has been destroyed by a tornado it was their fault.

In recovery, I've learned this belief is related to the sadness I felt from not being able to earn the affection of my parents. I thought if I could just be better in

some way or figure out what it is that makes me so unlovable that I could fix it. I wasn't ready to accept my powerlessness, and I was still acting like my own Higher Power. This ego trip lead to a lot of unmanageability in my life — and a lot of sadness.

I spent my adolescence and early adulthood thinking, "If I can't get a hug from my own mother and she is 'supposed' to love me, how am I ever supposed to get a woman to love me?" But I was still thinking that love (and sex) were the answers to all my problems.

When I'm thinking like this, if anyone shows me romantic interest, I feel like all my problems have disappeared. But if they cancel a date or don't promptly return a phone call, I go from Tigger to Eeyore in three seconds.

For years, I was powerless over this belief and my life became extremely unmanageable. I have spent tons of time crossing oceans for people who would not jump over puddles for me.

I'm realizing in recovery that there's not enough sex or love in the world to sweep away the sadness that comes from thinking I'm unworthy. Those feelings of unworthiness are what I've really been running from my whole life. But it's pointless to try to numb my feelings, because I will eventually have to deal with them.

Sometimes, I don't want to be abstinent, because I have to feel the things I don't want to feel. But I've learned I can never

act out long enough to make those feelings go away forever.

At my second SAA meeting, I met my sponsor. He told me if I were willing to take direction and go to any lengths, he would show me how to follow a program that would help me stop acting out one day at a time.

I have learned that the program works when I work it. When all else fails, ask for help and follow directions. When I do this, I not only get relief from my addiction — I'm happier.

My sobriety has not been perfect, but I have learned that the program works when I work it. When all else fails, ask for help and follow directions. When I do this, I not only get relief from my addiction — I'm happier.

What I have learned from doing my recovery work is that my dad was an angry, abusive, mean, cruel bully, because he was scared his whole life. He and my mother did not know any better. They could not love me because they did not know how to love themselves or each other. We got the best they had to offer, and, unfortunately,

it left a big hole in our hearts. Now I get to do the work of filling in that hole one step, one meeting, and one prayer at a time. Slowly, I'm learning to work the Third Step and let the love and care of my Higher Power fill the hole I tried to fill with acting out. Slowly, I'm becoming less sad and more happy.

Acceptance is the answer to all of my problems today.

I need to accept my siblings are not ready to communicate. I need to accept my parents didn't love me the way I wish they would have. I need to accept I am single. I need to accept I am not a superhero. I need to accept I can't control the aspects of my life that I don't like. I need to accept help from others. I need to accept I am lovable and I don't need to act out or hurt myself anymore. I need to accept I am enough. I need to accept self-care must be a priority. I need to accept when I am sad. When I struggle with acceptance I need to remember that my higher power can do for me what I cannot do for myself.

Slowly, I am accepting it's okay to be sad, and I don't have to try and fix it all the time. I am allowed to just be sad until I'm not anymore. I need to feel these things, be sad that they happened, stop trying to control them, and let my Higher Power do the work that only my Higher Power can do. Instead of fighting, I need to be willing to turn my feelings of sadness over to my Higher Power so I can grieve what was lost — and finally let it go.

The Action of Attraction



What Tradition Eleven really tells us about attraction versus promotion

BY PHILIP B.

I have heard and participated in many group discussions about Tradition Eleven, which states that our fellowship follows a public relations policy of “...attraction rather than promotion...” (Green Book p. 94). But exactly what does this mean?

SAA groups have debated this for years, often with great vigor and intensity. Unfortunately, these debates have not produced a set of clear guidelines. This lack of clarity has led to a passive, rather than active approach to outreach.

Groups have been held back from certain types of outreach. Why? Because they fear lapsing into promotion. How can we as a fellowship clearly delineate between attraction and promotion?

It's a critical question because it affects how we carry out Tradition Five outreach. Outreach is of vital importance, but it must not cross over into promotion. Tradition Eleven does provide clear guidance about the difference, although simply reading it may not produce actionable or operational clarity. It didn't for me. I expect that, for many of us, it will take some detailed analysis of the text to tease out a clear list of which activities are attraction and which are promotion.

Recently, and on several occasions, I've conducted exactly the type of analysis mentioned above. I studied the Tradition on pages 94-95 of the Green Book, word by word and line by line. These exercises did produce a very clear difference between attraction and promotion. I would like to offer the output of my studies in the following chart.

Perhaps it may be a useful tool for SAA groups to use when planning outreach or any other public relations activity. This chart is not meant to be definitive and conclusive. Rather, I encourage you to conduct your own study and come to your own conclusions.

Are there any general principles that can be extrapolated from the list opposite? I offer two:

1. Attraction is very active.
2. It's not the medium or channel of distribution but the content of the message that determines attraction versus promotion.

The first principle addresses an inadvertent but frequently observed mindset, that attraction is a passive endeavor. I've highlighted several words in the "Attraction" column; "striving", "taking responsibility", "raising", and "running" are actions.

Meetings, however, often wait for the sex addict who still suffers to contact them and then respond. If you don't think this is true, then sit down with your group or intergroup and list all of the outreach activities you are currently conducting. Then go back and mark the ones where

you reach out and find the addict vs. when the addict finds you and you respond to the contact. Both are important and necessary. For many groups, the majority of activities will be of the latter type, not the former.

On the other hand, there will be groups who are conducting active outreach. Other Traditions such as Tradition Five and Tradition Seven address passive outreach as a response to an inquiry. While each group must determine via its group conscience how best to proceed, both are important and necessary.

Tradition Eleven, however, focuses on active outreach — seeking and finding the addict who still suffers. From the perspective of this Tradition, there is nothing passive about outreach. It is very active.

The second principle addresses the confusion between a distribution channel and a message. I have been told by SAA members on several occasions that placing an ad in a local newspaper is promotion or that TV or radio ads are "out of the question" and blatantly promotional activities.

I can understand this belief since all of us have been bombarded with hundreds of thousands of promotional advertisements during our lives via these media. We no longer distinguish between the medium and how it is used; They are forever tainted as channels of "commercialism."

The faces of those who would restrict our use of certain types of media register surprise, almost shock, when the text of Tradition Eleven is read and states the

Attraction	Promotion
Maintaining anonymity w/press, media	Breaking anonymity
Focusing on program principles and how the program works from our direct experience	Emphasizing the details of personal stories
A simple declaration of who we are and what we do. An invitation to the program.	Celebrity endorsements. Identifying the program with an individual.
Striving to make our existence and message known.	Organizational endorsements
Taking responsibility to make SAA's presence known.	Claims of effectiveness
Raising public awareness	Trying to increase our membership; "membership drives" (rather than focusing on helping people)
Running public services announcements (PSAs) on local stations	Diagnosing: telling someone they are a sex addict, should attend meetings, or need recovery.
By inference: newspaper ads, websites, social media, billboards, etc.	Giving advice

exact opposite. Tradition Eleven actually says that TV and newspaper ads (by inference) are avenues of attraction and calls such activities "...a potential lifeline for the sex addict who may not know recovery is available..." It gives us great leeway regarding where and how we get our message out; that is, how we distribute the message. Thus, we can feel free to be creative and innovative.

The reverse is true when we consider the actual text of an outreach message. We are limited to focusing on program principles and how the program works based on our direct experience. The basic message of outreach is always some version of "We are SAA. This is how our program works. If you think you have a problem with sex addiction, you are invited and welcome

to attend a meeting to see if the program is for you or not." Promotion begins when we begin to embellish the message and stray from this simple formula. The message, not the medium determines attraction versus promotion.

From my reading of Tradition Eleven, the key is the ability to clearly articulate the difference between attraction and promotion. Once groups have this clarity, the limiting fear of lapsing into promotion can be banished.

As long as our message is a simple explanation of our program and an invitation to attend a meeting, we can be creative and employ many media or distribution methods to get our message out. We can and should be bold in our outreach activities.

HELP WANTED

Inquire Within

What Does 'Humbly Asking' in the Seventh Step Really Mean?

BY MIKE L.

It's probably appropriate for me to begin an article on Step Seven by admitting to what is one of my biggest shortcomings, and that is the need to do everything myself. I remember some years ago a friend of mine in another recovery program bluntly saying as much to me: "Mike, you don't have to handle this whole thing yourself."

Needless to say, when I first came to Step Seven, I may have read the actual words of the Step, but the words that resonated inside of me were, "Humbly asked God to show me how to rid myself of my shortcomings on my own." I have heard others share that they were more than willing to turn the whole task over to their Higher Power and that their shortcomings would magically fall away from them when God was ready. That was definitely not the approach I chose.

I set about doing Step Seven as a task for me, myself, and I: I had my list of shortcomings that I had put together from working Steps Four and Five and became ready to have "God" (i.e., me) remove them in Step Six. In other words, I was determined that I was going to start bludgeoning these shortcomings into submission to my will.

I'm kind of slow on the uptake sometimes. Therefore, I did not initially realize when approaching Step Seven that I had taken a similar approach to my sex addiction when

I was new to the program. I had a list of behaviors of which I was going to perfectly rid myself. I'm sure it didn't help that I did not know about the Three Circles for a while after I came into the program, and so I had this ever-expanding list of behaviors that meant I had lost my sobriety again; for example, looking into the car next to me was acting out. Needless to say, this overly-rigid view of sobriety meant that I was always new in sobriety.

Eventually, I did become acquainted with the Three Circles and realized that they gave me permission not to have to do my sobriety perfectly. "Progress, not perfection," I think the phrase goes. I could (and did) spend a couple of hours in the middle circle at a stretch — not that I'm saying I support one trying this at home — and still was finally be able to say, "Is this really something I want?" and extricate myself from whatever situation I was in this time.

However, when I came to Step Seven, I found myself once again attempting to bludgeon my shortcomings into submission. The only way I know how to achieve freedom from shortcomings through bludgeoning is by turning the bludgeoning back onto myself when I fall short. Just as feeling shame from acting out didn't lead to anything except further acting out, feeling shame from engaging in a shortcoming never served to free me from that shortcoming.

The essay on Step Seven in *Sex Addicts Anonymous* is very clear about the ideal approach to the Step, which states in the

very first paragraph: "Whenever we ask God for this help, we invite God into our lives in a new way" (p. 43). Asking God for help. What a concept.

When I came to Step Seven, I found myself attempting to bludgeon my shortcomings into submission. But I turned that bludgeoning back on myself when I fell short.

In my case, asking God for help took the form of periodically going back through my actions, acknowledging the areas where I could have done better, and simply turning them over to God. "Many of us work this step through prayer" (p. 44), and I found prayer to be a blessing.

I am by no means finished with the Seventh Step. My favorite analogy in this regard is that removing my shortcomings is like peeling off the layers of an onion. God and I, working together, continue to discover new areas to work on, areas that fifteen years ago I would never have even considered to be shortcomings.

Along the way, without even realizing it, I have made progress in my big shortcoming of thinking that I have to do it all myself. Once again, "not perfection," but at least progress.

ISO ANNOUNCEMENTS

Compulsive Sexual Anorexia Outreach Group Works on New Guide

The Compulsive Sexual Avoidance (CSA) Outreach Committee has recently changed its name to Intimacy and Sexual Avoidance (ISA). We feel that the new name more accurately reflects our recovery from sexual addiction and intimacy avoidance. The name change, we hope, will increase understanding of the connection between sexual addiction recovery and intimacy avoidance recovery. To see when the ISA meets, go to p. 29.

SAA Pamphlets Now Available to Read Online

The ISO is pleased to announce the availability of SAA pamphlets on the SAA website (saa-recovery.org). The pamphlets may be found by following the “SAA Literature” sub-tab from the home page. Also included are the pamphlets in Spanish and the “Pathway to Recovery” pamphlet in French.

This milestone has been accomplished by the combined efforts of the ISO Literature Committee, the ISO office, and the ISO Board of Trustees and its committees, specifically the Online Presence Committee and the International Development Committee. We believe that ready access to SAA literature online will greatly enhance the capacity of member groups and individual members of the fellowship to carry the SAA message of recovery more effectively and efficiently.

As before, the printed pamphlets are available for purchase from the ISO — either through the online SAA Store or by telephone or postal mail from the ISO office. Don't forget to ask about our volume discount.

Submissions Sought for SAA Meditation Book

The ISO Literature Committee welcomes submission of entries from the fellowship-at-large for possible inclusion in the SAA Meditation Book. The Meditation Book will consist of 366 entries, one for each day of the calendar year.

To ensure consideration, submissions should contain the following:

- » A short quotation taken from SAA publications that are Literature Committee approved or Conference approved (see list below). The quote must include the source and page number using the following style: Sex Addicts Anonymous, page 20. Quotes from other sources will not be considered.
- » The main body is an expansion of the topic or principle, ideally including perspective on a particular aspect of SAA recovery through your experience, your strength,

ISO ANNOUNCEMENTS

your hope, and your voice. Please note that we have found that using “I” rather than “we” in the body of the meditation makes for a stronger message. This is the critical component of your submission. We can add a quote or an affirmation, but only you can provide your ES&H.



- » At the bottom of the page, a concise statement to summarize the main idea of the meditation, or to offer a poignant challenge or affirmation.

Each entry should be 200-350 words including the quotation and the closing affirmation (1.5 - 3 sides, handwritten). Submissions must include your name and contact information to be cross-referenced with your release form.

Sources for Opening Quotation

Sex Addicts Anonymous (SAA Green Book); Sex Addicts Anonymous (Pamphlet); Abstinence; The Bubble; Three Circles; Getting a Sponsor; Writing to Prisoners; Sexual Sobriety and the Internet; Safe and Sexually Sober Meetings; Getting Started in Sex Addicts Anonymous; A Special Welcome to the Woman Newcomer; Recovery from Compulsive Sexual Avoidance; Group Guide; Intergroup Guide; Tools of Recovery; First Step to Recovery; Abstinence and Boundaries in SAA; SAA and the Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender Sex Addict

Release Form: The ISO must have a signed release before a submission can be considered. By signing the release, the author grants the ISO of SAA, Inc. sole rights to edit, alter, publish, or reject any submission. A blank release form is available in this newsletter or may be obtained from the ISO office or downloaded and printed from the SAA website.

Please send a digital copy of your submission (attached as .doc, .docx, .rtf, .txt, or in the body of the email) to: meditation@saa-recovery.org.

Include complete contact information and, if possible, a signed scanned release. All submitters must send or have sent a release form - one per author - before submissions can be considered.

You can also send your meditation, contact information, and signed release by postal mail to: Meditation Book, ISO, PO Box 70949, Houston, TX 77270.

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Want to connect with the International Service Organization website, staff, board of trustees, trusted servants, or special workers? Here's the contact info you need:

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The ISO of SAA Board of Trustees also has an e-mail box, which may be used to register comments, positive or negative, from the fellowship about the ISO staff: oochair@saa-recovery.org.

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CALENDAR

Here are tentative ISO outreach and committee meeting times for the next several months. Meetings times change often. All times are Central Standard Time.

First Sunday of the month

Audio Review Committee (odd months only)
— 2:30 p.m.

LGBT Outreach — 1:00 p.m.

Conference Steering Committee (CSC) -
Policy & Procedure — 2:00 p.m.

Prisoner Outreach — 8:00 p.m.

Second Saturday of the month

Intimacy and Sexual Avoidance — 8 a.m.

Author's Group — 4:30 p.m.

Women's Outreach — 5:00 p.m.

Second Sunday of the month

CSC - Area Formation — 2:00 p.m.

CSC - Nominating — 3:00 p.m.

Literature Committee — 4:00 p.m.

General Outreach — 6:30 p.m.

Third Tuesday of the month

CSC - Policy Structure Work Group — 5:00 p.m.

Third Thursday of the month

Seventh Tradition — 6:00 p.m.

2016 Convention — 7:00 p.m.

Third Saturday of the month

CSC - Twelve Concepts Work Group — 12:00 p.m.

Third Sunday of the month

CSC - Charter & Bylaws — 2:00 p.m.

Information Systems and Online Presence
Committee — 2:00 p.m.

SE Region — 6:00 p.m.

Fourth Sunday of the month

CSC — 2:00 p.m.

Meditation Writing Workshop — 5:00 p.m.

Intergroup Communications — 8:00 p.m.

To attend a committee meeting, you must be a member or be invited. If you're interested in joining a committee, email info@saa-recovery.org or call the ISO office.

Here's a listing of upcoming SAA events from around the fellowship.

November

The DFW Intergroup of SAA is sponsoring a full day of Twelve Step speakers and workshops on **November 14, 2015**, in Denton, TX. Coffee and lunch will be served. The event is open to men and women. For more information, go to saa-recovery.org/events.

Giving Thanks

Through its **November** Giving Thanks event, the San Francisco Bay Area fellowship has raised more than \$100,000 towards carrying the message of recovery. Thank you to everyone who has participated over the past nine years! More info at www.bayareasaa.org/events.

If you'd like your event to be listed in the Calendar section, please send it to toc@saa-recovery.org. To ensure your listing gets published in time, please send it at least two months in advance of the event.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Get Your Story Published in *The Outer Circle*

The Outer Circle newsletter relies on submissions from the Fellowship. It's a great way to carry the message to other sex addicts!

Articles may be submitted by email to toc@saa-recovery.org or by mail to the ISO office. If possible, please submit articles via email in Microsoft Word format. All articles must be accompanied by the **RELEASE FORM** at the bottom of this page.

Deadlines for Submission

Jan/Feb:	Nov 5
Mar/Apr:	Jan 5
May/June:	Mar 5
July/Aug:	May 5
Sept/Oct:	July 5
Nov/Dec:	Sept 5

Here are some general writing guidelines:

Personal stories can be anywhere from 500-1,000 words. The main guideline is to share your experience, strength, and hope in the principle of Step Twelve. It may be helpful to think of your submission as a written form of a share you'd give in a meeting — something that's working for you or that you're struggling with.

Also, please consider writing a 500- to 1,000-word article based on a workshop or talk you've given around the Steps and Traditions. Again, the key is sharing your experience, strength, and hope with other sex addicts. Please don't worry about grammar and spelling. We'll clean that up for you.

General Release Form

In consideration of being reviewed for possible publication, I hereby transfer and release to the ISO of SAA, Inc (assignee) all legal rights to the publication of my submission(s) or any edited version thereof in any official ISO publication, including Sex Addicts Anonymous, The Outer Circle, the SAA meditation book, the SAA websites, or any other SAA program material, such as pamphlets, booklets and audio recordings.

With this submission, I transfer to the assignee without limitation the legal title and all literary rights, including copyright and/or trademark and the full right and license to reproduce, copy, edit for content, modify, distribute, and create derivatives from the submitted work. I understand that every effort will be made to safeguard my personal anonymity in the publication and distribution of this material. I also understand that I may or may not receive further communication regarding my submission prior to its publication.

I hereby further attest that I possess full legal capacity to exercise this authorization, and I hereby Release the assignee from any claim whatsoever by me or my successors.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Printed name: _____

Witness: _____ Date: _____

Printed name: _____

SAA TWELVE STEPS

- 1.** We admitted we were powerless over addictive sexual behavior - that our lives had become unmanageable.
- 2.** Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
- 3.** Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood God.
- 4.** Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
- 5.** Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
- 6.** Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
- 7.** Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings.
- 8.** Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.
- 9.** Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
- 10.** Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
- 11.** Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood God, praying only for knowledge of God's will for us and the power to carry that out.
- 12.** Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to other sex addicts and to practice these principles in our lives.

